



## Transportation Accessibility

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## Transportation Project Basics

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- Funded through a grant administered by the Michigan Development Disability Council
- Mission:  
*To increase the voice of people with disabilities in transportation policy decisions.*

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## Importance of Public Transportation

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- Public transportation is the primary mode of transportation for many in Michigan, including many people with disabilities
- The availability of accessible transportation is consistently listed among the top barriers to independence by people with disabilities
- Access to transportation is essential for so much of what our communities have to offer: employment, recreation, social interaction, etc.

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### The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

- The ADA was signed into law into 1990 after years of advocacy by the disability rights movement
- Basic requirement: people with disabilities must have the same access to public transportation service as the general population

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### ADA Guidelines for Bus Lines

- All new line-haul buses must be lift-equipped
- Complementary paratransit service (ex. Spectran) must be available to anyone who lives within ¾ of a mile of a transit line but cannot access the service because of physical or mental disability

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### The ADA and other modes of transportation

- All other forms of transit, including dial-a-rides and door-to-door service, must also be accessible; this usually means having vehicles with lifts available
- Not all vehicles have to be accessible, but accessible service must be available on request
- The ADA also has regulations covering intercity rail and bus service (ex. Amtrak and Greyhound)

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## Act 51 and Accessibility

- Act 51 requires that all transit agencies submit an accessibility plan to MDOT each year
- This plan must be reviewed by a Local Advisory Council (LAC)
- At least 50% of the people on the the Local Advisory Council must represent people with disabilities and seniors

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## Access to Transportation Services

- The greatest transportation issue facing people with disabilities is the lack of availability of transit service
- About 1/3 of Michigan's counties do not have countywide transit service
- Even among counties with countywide service, it can be difficult to get a ride to the outlying areas

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### Michigan Local Public Transit Agencies



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## Availability of Transit Service

- Hours and days of operation are also an issue – people are often cut off from transportation after 5 PM
- Availability of buses can also be a problem, especially around peak transportation times

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## Physical Accessibility Issues

- Most systems in Michigan have good physical accessibility, including lift equipped buses
- However, there can still be accessibility problems, such as drivers who do not know how to operate the equipment or equipment that is improperly maintained

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## Other Physical Accessibility Issues

- Availability of bus information in alternative formats
- Accessible pedestrian paths to and from the bus stops
- Drivers calling out stops and major intersections

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## Paratransit Service Quality

- Paratransit door-to-door service is especially challenging to deliver
- As a result, many paratransit riders are forced to deal with such things as:
  - Spending 2 hours on the bus to reach their in-town destinations
  - Paratransit buses that are 1 hour late / early
  - Difficulties in scheduling rides

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## Attitudinal Barriers

- There are some transit agency staff who do not understand disability issues
- Most transit systems have staff “Sensitivity Training” in place to help staff work with people with disabilities
- Most transit system employees are very polite and helpful; however, such issues as rude drivers and schedulers continue to be problems

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## Access to the System

- Some Local Advisory Councils are no more than rubber stamps and do not give the transit consumers real input into the operation of the transit system.
- Sometimes, people with disabilities, who are riding the transit system and know it best, are completely ignored when making transit system decisions

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